



MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN TASK FORCE

MEETING NOTES

OCTOBER 28, 2003

4:00 P.M.

ROOM 113

Task Force Members Present	Nye Bond, Susan Dunn, Duane Eitel, Margaret Hall, Elaine Hammer, Rick Krueger, Greg MacLean, Bill McCoy, Eric Miller, Patte Newman, Oscar Pohirieth, Gordon Scholz, Terry Werner. (Kit Boesch, Marian Malone, and Tad McDowell absent)
Resource Panel Members Present	Mike Brienzo, Terry Genrich, Tim Howell, Brian Mathers, Sandra Strickland, Larry Worth
Others Present	Deb Peck, Brian Praeuner, June Remington, Alan Wickman, Kent Morgan, Duncan Ross, Michele Abendroth

Agenda Topics

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Morgan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Mailings to Task Force Members

Mr. Morgan reviewed the recent mailings that were sent to the Task Force members.

3. Public Comment Period (10 Min. Maximum)

Alan Wickman thanked Mr. Worth and Mr. Hoskins for their responses to the written questions he asked of them. He also thanked Mr. Morgan for distributing these responses to the Task Force, and then requested that the questions be distributed to the Task Force as well.

4. Taxi and County Service - Kirby Young (Servant Cab); Vicki Harding (Transport Plus); Tim Howell (Aging Commission)

Mr. Morgan stated that Vicki Harding was unable to attend the meeting today, but distributed a handout on her behalf.

Mr. Morgan introduced Kirby Young of Servant Cab Company. Mr. Young, co-owner of Servant Cab, has owned Servant Cab, along with his brother and sister, for a year-and-a-half. He noted that after they purchased the company, they made several changes including replacing older vehicles and adding more handicapped-accessible vehicles. Mr. Young stated that anyone who is confined to a wheelchair can call Servant Cab at any given time for service. They have

also changed the internal workings of the cab company and hired more consistent and better drivers.

Ms. Newman asked if there are vouchers for low income people. Mr. Young stated that they get calls almost every day from groups asking if there are discounts available. He noted that they would be willing to provide discounts to certain groups, although the Public Service Commission has dictated which organizations qualify, namely city or state government and the visually impaired.

Mr. MacLean asked Mr. Young how many vehicles they have currently. Mr. Young replied that there are 34. Mr. MacLean then asked how many are on duty at one particular time. Mr. Young responded that during the day there are typically 25 on the street, but it depends on the day. Mr. MacLean asked what the average waiting time is. Mr. Young responded that waiting times range from 5 to 30 minutes, and the average time is 15-20 minutes.

Mr. Bond asked how accurate is the pick-up time. Mr. Young replied that they take calls for specific pick-up times every day, and these are very close to accurate. However, they only take a certain number of these every day.

Mr. McCoy asked if there are any statistics on ridership. Mr. Young stated that he did not have that information at hand, but could provide it. Mr. McCoy then asked what are the peak hours. Mr. Young replied that peak hours are 6:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m. and also after school.

Mr. Morgan asked Mr. Young what his experience has been in regard to airport service. Mr. Young stated that they get schedules from the airport, but they change on a frequent basis, so it is difficult to keep up with. Also, you never know how many people will want a cab from the airport. There are also hotels who sub out their service to them, but other hotels only sub out a portion of it. There are so many variables which makes it difficult to provide consistent service.

Mr. Morgan asked what the average fare is. Mr. Young replied that it is about \$11.50 and the average trip is 4.5-5 miles.

Mr. Scholz asked if there has been a market analysis of people who rely on individualized service. Mr. Young responded that he has not seen a study, but he has only been in this business for a year-and-a-half. Mr. Scholz asked Mr. Young if he feels it is needed. Mr. Young stated that he does not know if the benefits would warrant the cost of the study. He also noted that the most complaints the Public Service Commission receives is that it is too costly to get to and from their destination.

Mr. Pohirieth asked if the service is being used mainly by mainstream society. Mr. Young responded that the highest percentage of riders are those on some kind of assistance.

Tim Howell of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging provided a brief history on rural transportation. Prior to 1981, StarTran provided rural transportation. In 1982, the county dropped rural transportation. In 1983, the county supported rural transportation through the Area Agency on Aging. In the past, the county was divided into 4 areas and each area was serviced 1 day a week. It is a door-to-door service and anyone who is a resident of Lancaster County can ride. The cost is \$1.50 per one way trip. They also have lift-equipped vehicles. Riders need to call one day in advance to make an appointment for the service.

Ms. Newman asked Mr. Howell what their cost is per trip. Mr. Howell responded that it is \$57. Their goal is to have full vehicles, which at this time, they do not have. They recently made a

change in dividing the county into 2 areas, and they run twice a week. There has been a 14% increase in riders since then.

Ms. Hammer asked who subsidizes the cost. Mr. Howell replied that the county provides 25%, the state provides 25%, and 50% is federally funded. They do not deny anyone a ride because of cost.

Mr. Werner asked if they have considered picking someone up and then taking them to a bus stop to get to their destination. Mr. Howell replied that ridership is better if you drop them off where they want to go.

Mr. Morgan asked what percentage of their riders are elderly. Mr. Howell responded that approximately 98% is elderly.

Mr. Scholz asked how many vehicles are in operation. Mr. Howell replied that they have 2 vehicles, but only 1 is running each day.

5. Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) - Jim Burden

Jim Burden distributed a handout from a book entitled *The Decline of Transit*, which describes how the transportation system in the United States came to be. The automobile is the primary mode of transportation everywhere in the world. In 1867, the first elevated railway was built in New York City. It could have been an automated transit system for single passengers, but it was a mass transit system. Individualized automated transit was not developed until 1933, which was a Swiss cable car technology that is used on ski lifts. From the 1880's until 1913, there was extensive work done all over the world on automated delivery of mail. By 1913, Electric Carrier Corporation had built an electric automated two foot gauge vehicle. In 1958, there was an article published on carrying humans in small single-seat vehicles that would move around on a suspended monorail.

Mr. Burden noted that all forms of transit use are 3-10 times the cost per passenger mile of automobile use. The PRT systems were found to be cheaper than automobile use. In the United States today, we have about a \$10 trillion gross domestic product. Out of that, just over \$2 trillion is invested in transportation alone. As that percentage grows, the number of people employed in transportation is going down as a portion of the total population. So we are spending evermore on transportation and yet we are getting less out of it, with the exception of a few certain industries, and even they are struggling.

Mr. Burden continued by stating that the City-County Transportation Improvement Plan states that we spend about \$30 million on streets in Lincoln. In fact, we have been spending about \$40 million. Last year, we spent \$90 million, and this year, we are spending \$120 million, and next year, we are going to spend \$156 million, and the following year is \$256 million. The PRT system is being proposed at a million dollars per mile. For approximately \$180 million, you could build approximately an 800 mile guideway system over the whole City. It would only be 100 pounds per linear foot, and it would only be two vehicles per span. This would give you PRT service. It does not buy the vehicles or the power supplies. These are bought as the users begin to use the system. But unless the users can get every place in the City, they are not going to use the system.

Mr. Burden stated that he is going to build a prototype, which will be a 120 mile per hour engineered speed system using a motor that is not much different than a truck starter motor. It

has perfectly adequate power. All the parts have been purchased locally, and it cost less than \$2500. It will take about 1,000 hours to put it together. It will not have automation because he cannot afford it at this time. The motors have extremely long service life and are virtually maintenance free. Mr. Burden noted that he is building the prototype because he wonders why this has never been done before.

Mr. Krueger asked Mr. Burden to provide a source on his figures stating that 19% of GDP is spent on transportation. Mr. Burden replied that he could provide many sources. Mr. Krueger stated he has a recent Harvard study showing that the cost of transportation for all services as relative to the GDP has steadily gone down.

Mr. Burden noted that transportation is oriented at making money. The engineering society promotes auto use because it employs engineers. If PRT came along, one-third of all civil engineers would be out of work within a decade. He continued by stating that there is a list of industries that would oppose PRT and the list was long. The list of people in favor of PRT was short and was made up of businesses that had cheaper, faster, more convenient transportation. Mr. Krueger asked what is wrong with cheaper, faster transportation. Mr. Burden replied that there are side effects in that roads take up a lot of land. PRTs sit on poles and are small.

Mr. Burden encouraged the Task Force to read the history on transportation and study the data. The problem is that people let the experts make the decisions for them, and the experts ensure that their industry comes out ahead. He is proposing that we become the first area in the world that allows advanced PRT systems.

6. Other Business

There was no "Other Business" discussed.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Morgan adjourned the meeting at 5:28 p.m.

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